

## ARMENIAN PAULICIANISM AND THE KEY OF TRUTH

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The first notice of Paulicianism in the Greek writers under its proper name comes from the seventh century, when a certain Constantine from the region of Mananali, southeast of Erzroom, in the Armenian province of Daron, reorganized the sect and conducted active missionary operations in Pontus and Cappadocia. The names which Constantine gave his disciples and churches—e. g., Timothy, Titus, Ephesus, Corinth—were borrowed from the writings of the apostle Paul; and the apparent partiality of Constantine and his followers for the Apostle to the Gentiles, of which this usage was cited as an instance, was made by modern scholars, beginning with Gibbon, to account for the origin of the name "Paulician." The origin of this name, however, as Professor Conybeare has lately pointed out, must antedate the seventh century, as it should be referred, not to Paul the apostle, but to Paul of Samosata.<sup>1</sup>

For a period of one hundred and fifty years from the time of Constantine the history of the Paulicians is one of persecution at the hands of the orthodox emperors of Byzantium. Justinian II in the seventh century, and Michael I and Leo V, the Armenian, in the ninth, when not incited by bigotry, persecuted these heretics with the hope of redeeming their own reputation for orthodoxy. But the Empress Theodora, the restorer of the images of the orthodox church, surpassed them all in bigoted zeal, and the pious devotion of the Greek historian has recorded with pride that under her short reign no less than 100,000 Paulicians were destroyed by fire and sword.

Persecuted in the mountains and valleys of Asia Minor, Pauli-

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 105, 106, and 129 of the "Introduction" to *The Key of Truth: A Manual of the Paulician Church of Armenia*, by Fred. C. Conybeare (Oxford, 1898). Professor Conybeare has called attention to the location of Mananali, which was not near Samosata, as usually supposed, but in Armenia. See "Introduction," p. 69.

cianism took refuge on the banks of the Euphrates and within the borders of Armenia. There, beyond the reach of Greek bigotry, and under the tolerant protection of the Arab caliphs, it flourished, and once, at least, it brought fierce retribution upon its persecutors, when, in the ninth century, emerging from their fortified town of Tephrike, the modern Divrik, east of Sivas, the Paulician military chiefs and their Mohammedan allies overthrew the armies of the empire, penetrated Asia Minor as far as Nicomedia and Ephesus, everywhere destroyed the images and relics of the Greek saints, and turned the cathedral of the last-named city into a stable.

That, however, was only a temporary blaze of Paulician power and exasperation. With the fall of their great leader Chrysocheir the military glory of the Paulicians passed away, and as before, so after that event, they remained a sect sorely oppressed and persecuted.

Emperors who sympathized with their cause sometimes pursued a middle course. A race of hardy mountaineers, the Armenian Paulicians, so dangerous to the empire when in alliance with the Arab caliphs of the East, could be employed as its guardians on its western borders. So the Iconoclast, Constantine Copronymus, in the eighth century, and the Armenian, John Zimisce, in the tenth, transplanted these heretics by the thousands from the regions of Erzroom and Melitine in Armenia Minor to the borderlands of Thrace. There, while the Paulician soldier guarded the line of the Danube against the barbarians, the Paulician missionary laid the foundations of the Bogomile church of the Bulgarians, and scattered in Europe the seeds of a reformation which should bear its full fruitage in a future age.<sup>2</sup>

In Armenia proper the Paulicians were by no means exempt from persecution. The Armenian Synod of Tevin (719) enjoined upon the faithful to shun and to hate these "children of the devil and kindlers of the eternal fire." The Paulicians, known in Armenia from the ninth century onward by the name of Tonrakians, from the town of Tonrak near the modern Bayezid, where their leader, Smpad of Zarehavan, made his headquarters, were often hunted like wild beasts by the Armenian authorities; they were scourged and

<sup>2</sup> A degenerate, Romanized remnant of the Paulicians of Thrace has survived to our own day. See Hamlin's *Among the Turks*, pp. 265 ff.

imprisoned; they were deprived of their eyesight; they were burned at the stake; they were driven wholesale out of their homes, and their villages were turned into ruins. The chief authorities of the Armenian church regarded them as "the little foxes that spoil the vineyards," and a favorite penalty in their hands was that of branding the heretic's forehead with the image of a fox. It was no meaningless vow, therefore, that the Paulician "elect one" took, to endure "scourgings, imprisonments, tortures, reproaches, crosses, blows, sufferings, and all the tribulations of the world."

The last persecution of the Paulicians in Armenia of which history has preserved a record was conducted in the middle of the eleventh century by Gregory Magistros, duke of Vasbouragan and Daron (the modern provinces of Van and Moush, respectively), who destroyed Tonrak and renamed it after St. George, and punished over a thousand of the heretics with baptism and confirmation.

Until the last century it was the general impression that since the time of Nerses the Graceful, of the twelfth century, who is the last Armenian writer to make mention of it, Armenian Paulicianism had become a thing of the past. But the heresy which was exiled to the western borders of the Byzantine Empire, only to live on to scatter the seeds of religious revolt in the western world, had also lingered on through the centuries to our own day in Armenia itself. Like Constantine of Mananali in the seventh century, Smpad of Zarehavan in the ninth, and Jacob of Hark in the eleventh, John Choushdak Vartabedian<sup>3</sup> rekindled the flames of Armenian Paulicianism in the eighteenth. Persecuted at Moush, he fled about 1775 to Constantinople, and thence to the Mekhitarist Convent of Venice. His heretical notions were soon discovered at Venice, and he was not allowed to stay there more than a few days. He returned to the Imperial City, where he was sent to the galleys for eight months, then found in a profession of Islam a temporary refuge. He afterward went to the district of Khnus, northeast of Moush, in Armenia, and with the backing of the Turkish governor extorted ordination from a bishop then residing in the vicinity of Manazkert, and commenced an active propaganda

<sup>3</sup> I am indebted for this name to an article in the *Puragn* of Constantinople for August 13, 1892.

of his heresy in the villages of the district. For this crime he was loaded with chains and sent to Etchmiadzin. But he escaped from prison and went back again to Khnus "to spread his poison." In 1801 his patron, the governor of Khnus, having been executed, he was forced by the Turks to return to Islam. His subsequent history is not known; but it is clear that his work had already taken deep root in the region of Khnus.<sup>4</sup>

The attention of the Holy Synod of Etchmiadzin was called to Vartabedian's followers in 1837 by Garabed, former bishop of Erzroom. Garabed was at that date bishop of the Armenians of Georgia, but he still had considerable knowledge of the affairs of his former people, who, at the close of the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-29, had emigrated in great numbers under his leadership from Turkish Armenia into the Tzar's newly acquired territories lying between Akhaltzik and Erivan.

In February, 1837, Garabed wrote to the synod that in the village of Arkhveli, in the province of Shirak, there were twenty-five households of Armenian immigrants from the village of Tchevirmé, of the district of Khnus, in the bishopric of Erzroom, who professed the heresy of the Tonrakians. Upon this, the Holy Synod dispatched to Arkhveli two priests to investigate the case. These called the people of the village together, and, after reading to them the bull of the synod, made an effort to discover the heretics in their midst. But all the confession they were able to elicit was: "We are children of the Illuminator." The inquisitors, not satisfied with this orthodox reply, confronted the people with some from neighboring villages with whom they had had intercourse, and the people then reluctantly confessed that they had known a priest in Khnus who had taught the heresy in question, but that they had not only refused to receive him, but had "anathematized him with anathemas," that the priest had "died like a dog," and that, while it was true that some of them had spoken of that heresy in conversation, it had been only ignorant foolishness on their part. Finally they gave a written promise "forever to repudiate the evil heresy and to remain steadfast in the confession and the laws of the orthodox Armenian church." One of

<sup>4</sup> See *A Study of the Sect of the Manichean-Paulician Tonrakians, and the Epistle of Gregory of Narek*, by Father Sarkisian (Venice, 1893), pp. 102-4.

the priests was afterward commissioned to reside at Arkhveli for the purpose of completely rooting out the heresy.

The Holy Synod, while concluding to resign to the tribunal of God the judgment of the deceased Khnus priest who had taught this heresy, resolved to counteract as much as possible the evil consequences of his work by informing the bishop of Erzroom, and asking him to root out the remnants of heresy that might still be lingering in the region of Khnus. At the same time a request was made of Baron Rosen, military governor of the Caucasus, "to direct the local civil authorities to watch the conduct and operations of the Armenian inhabitants of Arkhveli, with an eye to the heresy which has appeared in their midst." Baron Rosen made inquiries as to the nature of the heresy in question, to which the Holy Synod answered: "The heresy of the Tonrakians consists in this, that they reject the mediation of saints, condemn their images, deny the use of fasts, repudiate the value of prayers, reject the immaculateness of the Holy Virgin Mother of God and the Sacrament of baptism, etc."

This correspondence between the synod and Governor Rosen was still in progress when, in December, 1837, an advice came to the synod from the spiritual authorities of Gumri (Alexandrapol), through the consistory of Erivan, that a certain Garabed Megrdochian of that village, who had only in the preceding July adopted the heresy of the Tonrakians, had made an important confession on his bed of sickness, and had divulged the names of seven others in Gumri, who, some alone and some with their entire families, had received the heresy of the Tonrakians from George and Souvar of Arkhveli, and who had now also made confession and indicated their repentance. These eight men, four of whom could read and write, made written recantations, from which we gather the following points of doctrine of modern Paulicianism:

1. Christ is not God, but the Son of God, born a man of the Virgin Mary, subjected to suffering and to death on the cross, risen again from the dead, and now sitting on the right hand of the Father, making intercession for us.
2. The moral law, as given to Moses in the Decalogue, should be obeyed, but no trust should be reposed in external rites and observances. Making the sign of the cross and genuflexions are superfluous.

Pilgrimages to Etchmiadzin and Jerusalem and the keeping of fasts are of human invention and unnecessary. The worship of crosses and pictures of saints is idolatry. The sacrifice of the mass is a lie, and the elements of the communion are not the body and blood of Christ, but ordinary bread and wine. The baptism and muron or holy ointment of the orthodox churches are false and only the mark of the Beast on the forehead, and a handful of water is all that is necessary for the administration of Christian baptism.

3. A priest should not be called "Lord, Lord," but only a clergyman (literally "a man of orders"); for God alone is Lord. Confession to a priest is of no profit for the forgiveness of sins—the penitent should confess his sins to God alone. Neither can saints intercede for us.

4. Armenians, Russians, Georgians, and all others except the Nemetzni (the German evangelical millennialists from Wurtemberg who settled in seven colonies in the Caucasus in 1817)<sup>5</sup> are false Christians and idolaters whose baptism is not valid. The traditions of the church fathers have no binding authority, and the canons of the councils were inspired by the devil. For the time being, however, an outward conformity to the orthodox church's requirements should be maintained by the faithful, so that, if possible, all the people may in time be converted to their faith.

The confessions of Gumri caused renewed activity on the part of the Synod, and appeal was again made to the governor of the Caucasus. A civil inquest was then instituted by the military governor of Tiflis, General Praigon, into the heresy of Arkhveli, and in the spring of 1838 it was discovered that the heretics of Arkhveli and Gumri were as active as ever. The Tonrakians of the former village then numbered thirty-three households, and, to ward off suspicion, had built themselves an orthodox church. Three years later it was discovered that in 1837 the heretics of Arkhveli had "baptized each other" by night in a stable and in a private room. Their baptism had been observed in connection with the Lord's Supper, wherein the elements used had been a loaf of plain unleavened bread baked in an oven, and wine in an ordinary vessel placed on a common wooden table. Upon the bread they had pronounced the words:

<sup>5</sup> See *Researches of Smith and Dwight in Armenia*, Vol. I, pp. 264 ff.

"Take, eat; this is the body of our Lord Jesus Christ"; upon the wine the words: "This is the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." The candidate for baptism had approached the table with bared head, when the ministering officer had poured upon his head a first handful of water, saying: "In the name of the Father;" then a second handful, saying: "And of the Son;" then a third, saying: "And of the Holy Spirit, Amen;" whereupon the candidate had helped himself to a morsel of the bread and a drink of the wine.

General Praigon referred the case of the heretics to the provincial court of Gumri. Before the end of April (1841), however, there was issued a general imperial amnesty, and in the following September the court of Gumri advised the Holy Synod that the heretics of Arkhveli and Gumri had been included in the amnesty, and thus declared free from trial and punishment.

The Holy Synod, not satisfied with this decision of the court, appealed to the governor. It was in reply informed, in March, 1843, that the governor considered the decision of the court invalid, inasmuch as heretics did not come under the general head of criminals amnestied by the edict, and that he had accordingly ordered the further prosecution of the trial. In June, 1845, the upshot of the whole matter was thus communicated to the Holy Synod: The civil and criminal court of Tiflis, having examined the whole case, had declared that the four leaders of heresy at Arkhveli, among them George Sarkisian, who called himself a deacon, and Souvar Hohanessian, and the four at Gumri, were, under the criminal laws of 1842, subject to be drafted into the army; but inasmuch as they had organized their sect before the promulgation of the amnesty of 1841, the court, pursuant to the first article of that amnesty, had decided only to require of each individual the cost of the government investigations in his case—49 roubles and 50 kopeks (about \$35)—and to send these eight and their followers to the spiritual authorities of the Armenian church to be dealt with by them according to their own laws, at the same time forbidding George Sarkisian of Arkhveli to call himself a deacon, since he had failed to produce his credentials, and the authorities of the Armenian church refused to recognize him.

The Holy Synod replied that such penalty was altogether incommensurate with the heinousness of the heresy in question, and peti-

tioned the governor "that the guilty ones might be punished to the full measure of their grave transgressions against God, according to the proper sense of the law, just like other criminals."

With this protest the episode seems to have closed. Two years before, Nerses of Ashdarak had been elected *catholicos* of all the Armenians, and in May, 1846, he arrived at Etchmiadzin and assumed the duties of his position. During his eleven years' active pontificate all classes of heretics enjoyed peace, and we may presume that the Holy Synod was restrained by him in its orthodox zeal against the Paulicians.

These heretics, however, must have endured much petty persecution at the hands of their neighbors during those years. For some of them returned to their old homes in Khnus. About 1847 two families of them removed to the village of Khnus, "where," says the American missionary at Erzroom, writing in 1852, "they have been exerting their influence in a quiet way, till the number of families persuaded of the correctness of their faith amounts to eight, embracing about sixty souls."<sup>6</sup> Such was their activity in Khnus that as early as 1853 it was recommended that the village might be made a regular out-station of the Erzroom mission. In 1854 the village of Tchevirmé, in the same district, was reported as having among its forty households four, with about forty souls, that were openly Protestant, and by the year 1860 the number of Protestants in the village had doubled. From another source we know that these were originally Paulicians, and that Souvar Hohannessian of Arkhveli was the spiritual leader of this flock.

And who can tell how much Protestant missions in Armenia have been feeding on Paulician soil? Khnus and Tchevirmé, those ancient strongholds of Armenian Paulicianism, were not the only places where Paulicianism became a feeder to modern Protestantism. Eritzian, writing in 1880, states that of the one hundred and thirty seven Protestant households of Valarshabad or Neapolis (in whose vicinity Etchmiadzin is situated) nearly three-quarters were originally Tonrakian. The same writer further states that Tonrakians were numerous in his day in the provinces of Shirak, Galzwan, Pambak, New Bayezid, Erivan, and Etchmiadzin, associating in some places

<sup>6</sup> See *Missionary Herald* for December, 1852, pp. 359, 360.



with Russian heretics like the Molokans, and in others with Protestants. A careful investigation on the ground will, doubtless, reveal a very close connection between this ancient heresy and modern Protestantism in Armenia.<sup>7</sup>

But we must go back to what was the most important discovery of the inquisition of 1837. Sergius Haroutiounian of Gumri confessed in that year that he had learned the teachings above detailed in 1835 of George of Arkhveli, and that the latter had in his possession a heretical manuscript entitled "The Key of Truth," which contained all those teachings. This disclosure led to the seizure of "The Key of Truth," which, in February, 1838, the consistory of Erivan transmitted to the Holy Synod. It is a manuscript copy, octavo, written on paper in minuscule, of an ancient original the older portions of which perhaps go as far back as the ninth century.<sup>8</sup> It contains the baptismal service and the ordinal of the Armenian Paulician church, together with a catechism, and some controversial matter aimed at the abuses of the orthodox churches, like infant baptism, image-worship, mariolatry, and adoration of saints. Three whole chapters, all but the title and the first words of another, and important portions of five others—thirty-six pages out of the one hundred and forty-nine composing the body of the manuscript—were destroyed before the

<sup>7</sup> In the *Researches of Smith and Dwight in Armenia* (Vol. I, p. 272) is mentioned a sect of Oodis living in the provinces of Sheky and Lesgy, who were outwardly "united" to the Georgian church, and had Georgian and Russian priests when the German missionaries from Basel found them. These were doubtless Paulicians. The Paulicians are called *Oodik*, or "Eaters" (*Bak Oodogh*) by the orthodox Armenians because of their disregard of the fasts of the church.

<sup>8</sup> The attention of scholars was first called to this document and its contents by Alexander Eritzian in the *Portz* of Tiflis for October, 1880, and the text of it was published by Professor Conybeare in 1898. If one who has not himself seen this manuscript may venture an opinion with regard to it, I should say that this is probably a copy made early in the last century from one which was made "in the province of Daron" in the year 1782. The error in the dating at the beginning of the manuscript—namely, 1882 instead of 1782—seems to betray one who lived in the nineteenth century. According to testimony given by Paulicians of Arkhveli in 1838, the copy of 1782 was written by John Choushdak Vartabedian. This John's name, however, it should be noted, nowhere appears in our mutilated copy of "The Key of Truth." The name at the beginning of the fragmentary colophon, John Vahakouni, is not to be identified with it. The latter is not the name of a copyist, but of one of a number of persons who according to what follows, had requested the making of a copy in 1782. For a discussion of the age of "The Key," see Conybeare's "Introduction," pp. 29 ff.

surrender of the book, and numerous heretical words were carefully erased. Perhaps the bulk of the missing portions was not the most important to our purpose; and much of it was doubtless only a fuller exposition of teachings which are preserved, not adding materially to our understanding of those teachings; but one wishes that the fifteenth chapter, which treats of "The Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His Elect Holy Apostles" (pp. 56-59 of manuscript), the missing pages of the nineteenth chapter (pp. 74-77), which treats of the conditions for baptism, and of that portion of the first of the supplementary chapters which treats of the creation of Adam and of Jesus Christ (pp. 126, 127), could be recovered. We are still, however, able to learn much that is of importance of Paulician doctrine, and something of Paulician polity, from "The Key of Truth" as it is preserved in the archives of the synod of Etchmiadzin.

In "The Key of Truth" we have one of the few monuments of primitive Christian thought which have been preserved. No characteristic of it is more striking than its simple scripturalness. One looks in it in vain for the speculative type of doctrine which was pre-eminently the product of Greek thought, and gave rise to the councils and the controversies of the orthodox church. Its simple biblical character reminds one of apostolic days. The "Key's" idea of a Christian is characteristic—not a man who has the "orthodox" doctrine, but simply one who knows the Lord Jesus and keeps his commandments (p. 56).<sup>9</sup> While it contains next to nothing which is peculiarly Armenian, "The Key of Truth" represents that type of thought which would best have flourished on Armenian soil. With not a grain of speculation in its make-up, the Armenian mind was best adapted to develop a "Key of Truth" type of Christianity which in modern times only the advanced Protestantism of our day has been able to achieve. A system of doctrine, and a very consistent one, may indeed be easily derived from the "Key." But in what follows it should be remembered that the christological and trinitarian problems which so appealed to the Greek mind find no place in it. The writer of the "Key" never seems to have thought of them.

The Christology of the "Key" is Unitarian of the Adoptionist

<sup>9</sup> This and all subsequent references are to Conybeare's text.

type. Having this ancient relic of Armenian Paulicianism in our hands today, we can see that Gregory Magistros spoke with a knowledge of the facts in the case when he referred the origin of the Paulicians to the bishop of Antioch and third-century Adoptionist Unitarian leader, saying: "Here, then, you see the Paulicians who got their poison from Paul of Samosata."

While orthodox writers find in the infant Jesus God incarnate, and declare Mary to be mother of God and David to be father of God, the "Key" steers clear of all such mysteries. Nothing in it is more strongly emphasized than the undisguised humanity of our Lord. Without also a trace of Docetism, it contains no hint that the body of our Lord is a different kind of body from ours, or that his birth was unreal. Christ—so the "Key" teaches—was born a man. Inasmuch, however, as he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, his birth was miraculous. He was born the new Adam, and he was without either original or actual sin. As a man he lived for thirty years. At the beginning of his public ministry he was led by the Spirit to seek baptism at the hand of John; and when he was baptized he saw the Spirit descend upon himself and heard the voice: "This is my beloved Son." To him that was the hour of his adoption. Born a man, he was then adopted to be the Son of God. For then it was that he received his authority, and the offices of high-priest, king, and chief shepherd. Then was he chosen, and glorified, and strengthened. Then he became the light of the world, the way, the truth, the life. Then he became the gate of heaven, the foundation of our faith, and the savior of sinners. Then he was filled with the Godhead; then he became the loved one and the lamb without blemish. "Then he also put on the former robe of light which Adam lost in Paradise. Then he was called upon by the Spirit of God to commune with the Heavenly Father. And then he was appointed King over all things in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (pp. 5, 6).

Regarding Christ as the adopted and glorified Son of God, "The Key of Truth" lays little stress on the atonement. Christ's sufferings and death are indeed not ignored in it, and the communion of the body and blood of Christ is laid down as one of the essentials of salvation (p. 59). But the "Key" lays emphasis on the life of Christ,

rather than on his death, as the ground of human salvation. It is the living Man Jesus who fulfils all righteousness for us; it is the living and glorified Son that intercedes for us at his Father's right hand.

The Adoptionist Christology is in the "Key" the basis for exclusive adult baptism. As Christ received adoption only when he was able to be led by the Spirit of God, so the believer can receive the seal of his discipleship only when he has attained to an age of responsible maturity. Nothing, therefore, is more emphatically denounced in the "Key" than infant baptism. On the eighth day after the birth of a child, when a Christian name is given to it (Luke 2:21), the "elect one" should visit the parents and give them spiritual advice that they may bring up the child "in godliness, in faith, in hope, in love, and in all other good works" (p. 20). But the infant, conscious neither of original nor of actual sin (pp. 57, 58), is capable of no repentance, and baptism can be bestowed only upon one who seeks it with repentance and tears. No baptism, the "Key" also teaches, is valid without the exercise of personal faith. In support of this contention such passages are appealed to as the following: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16). "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12).

The "Key" has no such verbal distinctions to make as "baptism unto repentance" and "baptism unto faith"—"Johannine baptism by water" and "Christian baptism by the Spirit." But Professor Conybeare's statement that in the "Key" Christian baptism is "expressly identified with the baptism of John, which was not by the Spirit and fire, but by water only," rather misplaces the emphasis in the case. Rather is John's baptism identified with Christ's and his apostles'. John's baptism itself is "the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ" (p. 2). In fact, there seems to have been but one true baptism in the mind of the writer of the "Key" (pp. 21, 25), and that the baptism of a new life in Christ—of "regeneration"—which as such is the second of the Christian sacraments (p. 20). In the "Key" John's baptism itself, no less than Christ's own, has for its final object the Lord Jesus Christ; it is, in fact, only the prelude of

that message: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (pp. 3, 5). John himself preaches and teaches, calls to repentance and faith, then washes away the filth of the body—all preliminary to the Lord's bestowing "spiritual salvation" as the Lamb of God and our Intercessor (p. 3). If Johannine baptism receives any emphasis in the "Key" at all, it does so only as Christ himself, the believer's exemplar, stands in it as its central figure. As a call to repentance it is something more than merely a call to a renunciation of sins—it is a call to faith, to a knowledge of Christ, and to a baptism of the Spirit of the Heavenly Father (pp. 3, 4). The baptism by water, in that case, if it is to mean anything at all, must immediately be followed by the believer's *adoption* as a disciple of Christ. In itself a mere washing of the body, it should become the occasion of a surrender of one's self to Christ and an anointing by the Holy Spirit. This conception—not of two baptisms essentially different, but of one baptism, the baptism of adoption, of which John's ceremonial baptism is only a prelude and type—is imaged in the baptismal service of the "Key" in an interesting ritual (p. 33), which Professor Conybeare's translation fails to bring out. As the catechumen kneels in the water, the elect one pours some water on his head, "*reserving the thought, the form, and the intention*" of baptism—that is, without yet actually administering the sacrament either in thought and intention, or in the threefold pouring of water—and declares him baptized, in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then the Christian rite follows: the elect one baptizes the catechumen "*in thought, in word, and in act*"—in his own intention, in the use of the trinitarian formula, and in the corresponding threefold pouring of water—when the catechumen is loosed from the bonds of Satan by the Father, is inspired with the hope of salvation by the Son, and is endued with love by the indwelling Spirit. As after the ceremony of water-baptism the elect one reads passages on Jesus' coming to the Jordan to be baptized of John (Matt. 3:13; Mark 1:9; Luke 3:21; John 1:29), so after the Christian rite of adoption he reads the accounts of Christ's adoption (in Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11, etc.) and of the gift of the Spirit to the apostles in Acts 2:1-4, and offers up a prayer of thanksgiving to the Father who has made his servant worthy to be baptized "in the name of his only-begotten

Son," and a petition to the Son to receive the catechumen among his disciples, and to bestow upon him the spirit of his Father. This Paulician baptismal service, in thus making water-baptism a prelude to a baptism and adoption in Christ, prefigures that passage from Paul which is later so appropriately read by the elect one: "So that the law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:24-29).

If the Paulicians regarded their baptism to be, as a Christian rite, essentially a baptism by the Spirit, then we should expect them not to have been over-scrupulous about the symbolic form of it. And such we find to have been actually the case. Their regular mode of baptism, as we find it in the "Key," is that combination of immersion and pouring which is known to be of very ancient origin in the Christian church. The candidate kneels in the water (p. 32), and the elect one pours three handfuls of water on his head, severally in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. This mode was observed by two Paulician converts from Gumri who were baptized in a stream in the neighborhood of Arkhveli in 1837. But we have seen that the Paulicians of Gumri affirmed that according to Paulician teaching a handful of water was enough for baptism, and in Arkhveli some were baptized in the same year from a bowl of water in a stable and in a private room.

When we come to the question of the polity of the Paulician church we find ourselves somewhat on debatable ground. For "The Key of Truth," being, as it is, merely a manual for the use of the clergy of the church, furnishes only incidental information on this point. The question turns on this one problem: Were the "rulers" spoken of in the "Key" lay elders or ordained presbyters? Professor Conybeare, judging from the derivation of words (the word for "ruler"—*ishkhan*—having the same derivation as the term which designates the office of the "elect one"—*ishkhanoutioun*), thinks it probable that the ruler was an ordained presbyter or elect one. His argument from orthodox analogy, however, is not conclusive; for in the modern orthodox Armenian church itself, while the priest's office may be designated as *ishkhanoutioun*, the *ishkhan* are lay

elders or trustees. For the following reasons it seems more probable to the present writer that the ruler was a layman: (1) The two offices of "elect one" and "ruler" are clearly distinguished in the nomenclature of the "Key." The elect one is the "elect one of Christ," a sort of vicar of Christ in the church, endowed with his Spirit and vested with his mission on earth. The rulers represent the universal and apostolic church, and stand in the place of the apostles of Christ. The rulers and arch-rulers are also "elders." The elect one is also "teacher," "doctor," "primate," "bishop," "priest," "apostle," all of which terms are used interchangeably in the "Key." But none of the names designating the pastoral office is used interchangeably with "ruler," "arch-ruler," or "elder."

(2) In the ceremony of ordination the rulers seem to identify themselves with the congregation and to be so identified by the elect one (pp. 43, 44). The rulers bring the candidate before the elect one and request him to ordain him in these words: "Holy father, falling down on our faces, we beseech, pray, and entreat thee with fervent love, to ordain this man *for the government of our souls.*" Then the elect one addresses the rulers in these words: "Now you who desire to have this man *as your shepherd*, have you tested him well, as I have tested him with much loving scrutiny?" To which question of "the apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ" the rulers reply: "Yes, our excellent father; for all that thy lordship saith we have fulfilled by God's help." Then the elect one says *to the rulers and to all the hearers*: "I am free from responsibility in this matter, and yourselves are responsible." (3) There is a noteworthy divergence of usage between the baptismal service and the ordinal of the "Key" which must be explained on the assumption of a corresponding distinction in the offices of the church. While the candidate for baptism is examined as to his faith "before the elect one and all the rulers" (p. 29), much as he is examined before the church session of a Presbyterian church, it is expressly provided that none but an elect one shall perform the ceremony of baptism (p. 30). It is otherwise with the ceremony of ordination. Not only do the rulers as well as the elect one examine the candidate for ordination with respect to his qualifications, but they also take an active part in the laying on of hands. Baptism was a sacrament, and could be administered only by an elect one.

Ordination was not a sacrament, and could therefore be very properly participated in by the representatives of the people. (4) The sovereignty of the people in the appointment of their clergy was a recognized fact in the Paulician church. The final responsibility of the ordination of a candidate, we have seen, rested with the rulers *and the people*. Such expressions also of the orthodox Armenian writers, otherwise obscure, as "their self-conferred contemptible priesthood" (Gregory of Narek), and "their outlandish election by consent" (Gregory Magistros), are best explained on the supposition that the right of ordination in the Paulician church was vested in the lay membership of the church. If this was the case, a lay presbyterate exercising authority in the people's name becomes a strong probability in the government of the Paulician church.

Taking these considerations in conjunction, we may affirm, with a degree of certainty, that the Paulician ruler was a lay elder, and that the polity of the Paulician church was a sort of Presbyterianism. Beyond that general statement, however, we cannot venture; and what the difference was between rulers and arch-rulers we have no means of determining.

The Paulician clergy were not a priesthood. The Paulicians did not draw that hard and fast line between the clergy and the laity which the orthodox churches drew. A characteristic clerical qualification laid down in the "Key" is that the elect one should be neither taller nor shorter in stature than ordinary men. The believer was supposed to receive the Spirit at his baptism; the elect one received the Spirit for his special calling at his ordination. Both were said to be received into the number of Christ's disciples. And such a prayer as this in the ordinal, "Establish thou this thine elect one in those works which thou hast committed to all thine elect and to all those who believe on thee" (p. 50), would seem to indicate that the Paulicians, after all, believed in the apostleship of all believers.

As the Paulicians had no priesthood exalted above the common laity, so they had no hierarchy, and believed strictly in the parity of the clergy. To them there was no high or low in the ministry, no great or small, and no apostolic succession except such as was conferred directly by Christ by the laying on of hands of the candidate's own fellow-believers.



To come to the Paulician ordinal. It was the elect one's special duty to examine the candidate,

to see if he has perfect wisdom, love which is greater than all things, discretion, meekness, humility, righteousness, manliness, purity, and the gift of speech. Also whether he has continence, patience, the ability to govern, fitness for the pastoral office, love of the poor, pity and tact, and all other good qualities, and repentance along with a keen conscience. (P. 39.)

In connection with the candidate's ordination the ceremony of "changing the name" was observed. The rulers came forward at the motion of the elect one and laid their hands on the candidate's head. Then the elect one handed him the New Testament and asked: "What is thy name, my beloved son?" To which the candidate answered: "The name of thy servant is Simon." (The manuscript has it, "Peter," which must be a copyist's error. For the words immediately follow: "Then the apostle shall change his name *according to the gospel*" [see John 1:42, and Matt. 16:17, 18].) His name was thereupon changed to Peter, after which he was given his "authority" in these terms: "Receive thou authority to bind and to loose the sons of men in heaven and on earth" (p. 45). This authority, however, placed no priestly powers of absolution in the hands of the candidate. For to the writer of the "Key" auricular confession, priestly absolution, purgatory, the pretenses of popes and patriarchs and prelates, are all an abomination.

The second half of the ordaining prayer is worth reproducing here. It was offered in concert by the elect one and the rulers, as they held their hands on high, and was addressed to Christ:

O thou life and refuge, mediator and intercessor, now head of things in heaven and on earth and under the earth, thou gate of heaven, the way of truth, and life unto those who rightly believe on thee, who hast promised in thy word of truth, "Whosoever cometh unto me shall not remain in the darkness," and "Him who cometh unto me I shall not cast out," do thou, we beseech thee, entreat thee, and pray thee, now falling down upon our faces at thy feet with fervent love and bitter tears, send the Grace of thy Father unto this man who hath been baptized in thy holy name and hath been elected in the Holy Spirit of thy Father, and now waits for thy promise of truth, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high," that it may set in order his spirit and mind and body, and cleanse him of all evil thoughts; and do thou give unto him thy Spirit which thou didst receive of the Father at the River Jordan; strengthen thou him and open, Lord, his mind to know the Scriptures

and to take up the cross willingly and to come after thee now and ever and unto the eternities of eternities. Amen. (P. 46.)

At the close of the ordaining prayer the elect one breathed on the candidate thrice, saying: "May the breath of our Lord Jesus Christ open thy mind, my beloved son, and establish thee in thy works." The actual gift of the Holy Spirit was supposed to be experienced by a forty days' study of the New Testament under the elect one's direction, in imitation of the forty days which Christ spent in the wilderness.

Of sacraments "The Key of Truth" recognizes only three, namely, repentance, baptism or regeneration, and the communion of the body and blood of the Lord. When Christ said, "This is my body," the Spirit of the Father had actually changed the bread into his body; and the "Key" would appear to teach some sort of transubstantiation effected by the elect one. For when Christ said explicitly, "This is *my* body," he had in mind the fact "that there were to come false popes who should change [the elements] according to their own good pleasure—who should deceive men with plain bread, or change it into their own body and blood *and not into those of Christ*" (p. 64). Such a statement, however, should be taken with caution. It cannot be a deliberate statement of fact, much less can it imply what Professor Conybeare holds to be true, namely, that the Paulicians believed that their elect one changed the bread into his own spiritual body and thereby into the body of Christ.

The calumny or ignorance of orthodox writers had led students of Paulicianism to believe that the Paulicians rejected the Old Testament and the writings of the apostle Peter. But we have seen that the Paulicians of Gumri spoke approvingly of the Decalogue. The story in Genesis of man's creation and fall is quoted in the "Key" as from the God-inspired Book; and we know from John of Otzin (eighth century) that the Paulicians quoted the prophets. As to Peter, he is never spoken of disparagingly in the "Key." On the contrary, his words are quoted as the words of a member of the Universal and Apostolic Church. Only, it is affirmed that "the Twelve," including Paul, are the "Universal Church," and not Peter alone.

The Paulicians did not call themselves Paulicians or Tonrakians, but the Universal and Apostolic Church. To them the orthodox churches, by turning baptism into a magic art, had apostatized from

the faith, lost their orders, and forfeited their sacraments. As to their mariolatry and adoration of saints and pictures and crosses, it was all nothing but idolatry. Says "The Key of Truth":

Some have denied the precious mediation and intercession of the beloved Son of God, by going after the dead, and especially after pictures, stones, stocks, streams, trees, fountains and other vain things, which they accept and worship offering to them incense and candles and sacrifices, all which is contrary to the Godhead—all which our Lord trampled under his holy feet when he said, "I am the door: by me if any man go in and out, he shall enter and shall find pasture" (p. 53).

A faith, sturdy and puritanic, on the eastern borders of the Roman Empire, Paulicianism, as we have already seen, once and again, sometimes by the daring and devotion of its votaries, sometimes by the impact of alien forces, was hurled upon the Christianized idolatry of the Greek world. But it bore more fruit in the western church than it did in the eastern. For the tenets of Paulicianism, planted in Europe in the eighth and tenth centuries, spread into Poland and Bohemia, into Italy and France, into the countries of the Rhine, and even into far-off England, everywhere preparing the way for the great Reformation which was to come.

Nor were the Armenians to be left without a share in that great awakening. The bread which they cast upon the waters after many days returned to them again.

In the nineteenth century Protestantism took the place of Paulicianism in the Orient. As in olden times Paulicianism was pre-eminently an Armenian heresy, so now Protestantism drew its adherents in the oriental churches almost exclusively from those of Armenian race. But Armenian Protestantism was destined to have a better lot than fell to the share of Armenian Paulicianism. Political conditions were much the same in the nineteenth as in preceding centuries; if the sultans of Turkey had succeeded the caliphs of Bagdad as the friends of iconoclasm, the Russian power would have succeeded the Byzantine as the champion of Greek Orthodoxy. But in one respect conditions were new; the Protestant powers of the world in the nineteenth century were a factor which was absent in olden times, and Armenian Protestantism found in them the strong support for which Armenian Paulicianism had vainly sighed.